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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
THE HONORABLE HAROLD BROWN
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
AT THE CONVOCATION CEREMONIES FOR
THE 97TH NAVAL WAR COLLEGE CLASS
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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 1980

It is indeed a pleasure to be here at the Naval War College. Your tour here will be a marvelous opportunity to step back from day-to-day line responsibilities and to give some intense and serious thought to a number of important national security issues.

One of the most critical of these and one currently receiving much public attention is strategic nuclear policy. That is the subject of my remarks today.

Fashioning strategic nuclear policy that will lead us away from nuclear war and not toward it requires dispassionate analysis, balanced judgments and a firm grasp of the complexities of the nuclear age.

The overriding objective of our strategic forces is to deter nuclear war. Deterrence requires stability. To achieve strategic nuclear stability, three requirements must be met:

First, we must have strategic nuclear forces that can absorb a Soviet first strike and still retaliate with devastating effects.

Second, we must meet our security requirements and maintain an overall strategic balance at the lowest and most stable levels made possible by our own force planning and by arms control agreements.

Third, we must have a doctrine and plans for the use of our forces (if they are needed) that make clear to the Soviets the hard reality that, by any course leading to nuclear war, they could never gain an advantage that would outweigh the unacceptable price they would have to pay.

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The ability of our forces to survive a surprise attack is the essence of deterrence. Today, our Triad of strategic nuclear forces assures that our deterrent is survivable.

But in the future, Soviet military programs could, at least potentially, threaten the survivability of each component of our strategic forces. For our ICBMs, that potential has been realized, or close to it. The Soviets are now deploying thousands of ICBM warheads accurate enough to threaten our fixed MINUTEMAN silos. For our bombers, the threats are more remote, and for SLBMs, more hypothetical. But, the Soviets are developing, for deployment in the mid-1980s, airborne radars and anti-aircraft missiles to shoot down our penetrating B-52s. And they are searching intensively for systems to detect and destroy our ballistic missile submarines at sea. These Soviet efforts cannot be ignored.

We are responding to these current and future threats by appropriately strengthening our strategic nuclear capabilities across the board. This is necessary because, while we have essential equivalence now, the scale and momentum of Soviet programs during the 1970s, inevitably carrying over into their deployments during the 1980s, require offsetting actions by the United States. Though we made some significant advances, expecially in MIRVed warheads, our investment in strategic programs in that decade was less than one-third of what the Soviets spent on their strategic programs. If we had let that trend continue, we would have faced, by the mid-1980s, at best a perception of inferiority, at worst a real possibility of nuclear coercion.

So we are strengthening all three elements of our strategic forces:

- In three-and-one-half years, we have put the TRIDENT missile and submarine program back on track. We have begun to equip our POSEIDON submarines with the new TRIDENT I missile, that increases by ten-fold the ocean areas in which they can patrol and still be within range of their targets. The first TRIDENT submarine, the USS OHIO, will begin sea trials this year and will join the fleet next year. Her sister ship, the USS MICHIGAN, will be launched soon.

- We are taking important steps to maintain a viable and effective bomber force. Early in his term, President Carter concluded that air-launched cruise missiles would be a more effective and more efficient strategic weapon than the B-1. Since that time, U.S. technical developments and intelligence information on advances in Soviet air defenses have strongly confirmed that judgment.

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Meanwhile, we are continuing to develop the technology and to do design work on a new cruise missile carrier aircraft and a new bomber, should they be needed to cope with the threat of the 1990s and beyond.

- Our most significant force deficiency in the next few years will be the vulnerability of our fixed silo ICBMs. Observers saw this trend coming for many years, but no sound technical solution was found until the MX multiple protective shelter concept was developed and selected in 1979. That program--which we believe Congress and the public will continue to support--is highly important for preserving the long-term strategic balance. The other elements of our strategic force--each of which will be improving rapidly in the early 1980s--enable us to maintain the balance and a survivable deterrent during this temporary vulnerability of ICBMs. But that is not a situation we want to live with indefinitely. We need to insure against the potential vulnerabilities of the other legs of the Triad, and not allow, for example, a total concentration by the Soviets on their anti-submarine capabilities. Hence the need for MX. The great effort (and considerable cost) that we are willing to expend to ensure MX surivivability is evidence that we, plan our strategic forces in a retaliatory role. A survivable system is less threatening than the vulnerable one it replaces.

Not strictly a part of our strategic forces, but critical to the overall nuclear balance, are theater nuclear forces. Last year, the NATO alliance reached a collective decision--a very difficult decision for some allies--to respond to the large-scale Soviet theater nuclear force buildup. This decision involves a combined program of improved U.S. long-range theater forces--ground-launched cruise missiles and Pershing II--and the pursuit of efforts to negotiate with the Soviets equitable and verifiable limits on the theater nuclear forces of both sides. We have also demonstrated our support for a strong allied nuclear capability by the recent agreement to make TRIDENT missiles available for a modernized British nuclear force.

These programs capitalize on U.S. technological strengths--in submarine design and quality, in cruise missile accuracy and miniaturization, and in an effective concept for mobility for land-based missiles. They are solutions for the long-term, not simply stop-gap measures. In strategic forces particularly, we need to put our resources into weapon systems that will serve our needs for the long pull, and not waste effort to produce early but only incomplete and temporary solutions.

Taken together, these programs strengthen deterrence. They provide for increased survivability for our strategic forces, by reducing our vulnerability to Soviet threats. They maintain strategic stability by enhancing our capacity to deter nuclear war.

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A second part of our program to achieve strategic stability has been the pursuit of equitable and verifiable strategic arms control agreements, such as the SALT II Treaty. Arms control is not a substitute for vigorous force modernization, but rather complements it, by imposing effective controls on the size and capabilities of Soviet strategic forces. At the same time, it permits us to carry out the programs we need to maintain the strategic balance.

This Administration, like every Presidential Administration since the dawn of the nuclear age, has pursued nuclear arms control--not as a favor to our adversaries or out of any illusions regarding their true character, but as a means of enhancing our own security and the peace of the world. We want arms control agreements with the Soviets, and they with us, because we are adversaries; such agreements are not needed between friends. Mutual interest is the driving force, and mutual benefit the necessary criterion, for any arms control agreement between the superpowers.

The SALT II treaty will restrain the buildup of Soviet strategic arms to well below what it would likely be without the SALT II limits--the Soviets will be required to reduce their current strategic nuclear forces by about 10 percent and will be limited in the number of warheads they can deploy.

SALT II will make future Soviet strategic forces more predictable both in numbers and characteristics--thus making our own defense planning easier.

SALT II will prevent an unnecessary, unconstrained, and very expensive strategic arms race with the Soviet Union. This is all the more important when we face a pressing need to put more money into conventional forces--a requirement now even more urgent as a result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff continue to consider the limitations imposed in the SALT II Treaty to be in our national security interest.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan made it necessary, in practical political terms, to defer SALT II ratification while we assessed the Soviet action and implemented the necessary responses. But ratification of the treaty at the earliest feasible time is still important to our national security interest.

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In addition to strategic forces that are technically adequate, we need a policy framework :

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- to prescribe what we must do so that deterrence continues to work;

- to guide our procurement strategy for acquisition of strategic nuclear forces and the corresponding command, control, and communications systems; and

- to shape our operational planning for the use of our forces in war, if necessary.

As a complement to our force modernization efforts and our arms control negotiations, for the past three years we have been working intensively to make deterrence more certain and more effective, through better planning and a more cogent statement of our strategic doctrine. In this process, we have taken a number of important analytic and operational steps.

In the summer of 1977, President Carter ordered a fundamental review of our targeting policy. Over the course of the next 18 months, that study was conducted by military and civilian experts taking into account our forces, plans, problems, and capabilities, as well as Soviet perspectives, strengths, and vulnerabilities.

Since my report to the President on that analysis, we have been moving deliberately to implement its basic principles. I outlined the major precepts of this countervailing strategy in my Defense Report in early 1979, and in more detail in January of this year.

At a meeting of the NATO Nuclear Planning Group in June of this year, I briefed our Allies on the conclusions we reached and the actions we are taking. They fully support the need for the United States to have a wide range of strategic nuclear options. Our countervailing strategy is fully consistent with NATO's flexible response and indeed indicates our determination to carry out that Alliance strategy.

President Carter has recently issued an implementing directive--Presidential Directive No. 59--codifying our restated doctrine, and giving guidance for further evolution in our planning and systems acquisition.

Obviously, the details of our planning must remain a closely guarded secret. Nonetheless, the basic premises of our policy can be stated publicly without compromise to our security. In fact, it is very much in our national interest that our deterrence policy--and the consequences of aggression--are clearly understood by friend and adversary alike.

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At the outset, let me emphasize that P.D. 59 is not a new strategic doctrine; it is not a radical departure from U.S. strategic policy over the past decade or so. It is, in fact, a refinement, a codification of previous statements of our strategic policy. P.D. 59 takes the same essential strategic doctrine, and restates it more clearly, more cogently, in the light of current conditions and current capabilities.

Moreover, one purpose of my own exposition of the subject today, as of my previous statements along these lines, is to make clear to the Soviets the nature of our countervailing strategy. This is to assure that no potential adversary of the United States or its Allies could ever conclude that aggression would be worth the costs that would be incurred. This is true whatever the level of conflict contemplated.

Deterrence remains, as it has been historically, our fundamental strategic objective. But deterrence must restrain a far wider range of threats than just massive attacks on U.S. cities. We seek to deter any adversary from any course of action that could lead to general nuclear war. Our strategic forces also must deter nuclear attacks on smaller sets of targets in the U.S. or on U.S. military forces, and be a wall against nuclear coercion of, or attack on, our friends and allies. And strategic forces, in conjunction with theater nuclear forces, must contribute to deterrence of conventional aggression as well. (I say "contribute" because we recognize that neither nuclear forces nor the cleverest theory for their employment can eliminate the need for us--and our allies--to provide a capable conventional deterrent.)

In our analysis and planning, we are necessarily giving greater attention to how a nuclear war would actually be fought by both sides if deterrence fails. There is no contradiction between this focus on how a war would be fought and what its results would be, and our purpose of insuring continued peace through mutual deterrence. Indeed, this focus helps us achieve deterrence and peace, by ensuring that our ability to retaliate is fully credible.

By definition, successful deterrence means, among other things, shaping Soviet views of what a war would mean--of what risks and losses aggression would entail. We must have forces, contingency plans, and command and control capabilities that will convince the Soviet leadership that no war and no course of aggression by them that led to use of nuclear weapons--on any scale of attack and at any stage of conflict--could lead to victory, however they may define victory. Firmly convincing them of that fundamental truth is the surest restraint against their being tempted to aggression.

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Operationally, our countervailing strategy requires that our plans and capabilities be structured to put more stress on being able to employ strategic nuclear forces selectively, as well as by all-out retaliation in response to massive attacks on the United States. It is our policy--and we have increasingly the means and the detailed plans to carry out this policy--to ensure that the Soviet leadership knows that if they chose some intermediate level of aggression, we could, by selective, large (but still less than maximum) nuclear attacks, exact an unacceptably high price in the things the Soviet leaders appear to value most--political and military control, military force both nuclear and conventional, and the industrial capability to sustain a war. In our planning we have not ignored the problem of ending the war, nor would we ignore it in the event of a war. And, of course, we have, and we will keep, a survivable and enduring capability to attack the full range of targets, including the Soviet economic base, if that is the appropriate response to a Soviet strike.

At the President's direction, the Department of Defense has, since 1977, been working to increase the flexibility of our plans to make use of the inherent capabilities of our forces. We are also acting to improve our ability to maintain effective communications, command and control of our forces, even in the highly uncertain and chaotic conditions that would prevail in a nuclear war. These actions greatly strengthen our deterrent.

This doctrine, as I emphasized earlier, is <u>not</u> a new departure. The U.S. has never had a doctrine based simply and solely on reflexive, massive attacks on Soviet cities. Instead, we have always planned both more selectively (options limiting urban-industrial damage) and more comprehensively (a range of military targets). Previous Administrations, going back well into the 1960s, recognized the inadequacy of a strategic docrine that would give us too narrow a range of options. The fundamental premises of our countervailing strategy are a natural evolution of the conceptual foundations built over the course of a generation, by, for example, Secretaries McNamara and Schlesinger, to name only two of my predecessors who have been most identified with development of our nuclear doctrine.

This Administration does not claim to have discovered the need for broad scale deterrence, or for improved flexibility, or for secure and reliable command and control of our own forces should deterrence fail, or for effective targeting of military forces and their political leadership and military control.

This evolution in our doctrine enhances deterrence, and reduces the likelihood of nuclear war. It does so because--like our nuclear modernization programs--it emphasizes the survivability of our forces and it conveys to the Soviets that any or all of the components of Soviet power can be struck in retaliation, not only their urban-industral complex.

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What we have done in the past three and a half years is to look more closely at our capabilities, our doctrine and our plans in the light of what we know about Soviet forces, doctrine, and plans. The Soviet leadership appears to contemplate at least the possibility of a relatively prolonged exchange if a war comes, and in some circles at least, they seem to take serously the theoretical possibility of victory in such a war. We cannot afford to ignore these views--even if we think differently, as I do. We need to have, and we do have, a posture--both forces and doctrine--that makes it clear to the Soviets, and to the world, that any notion of victory in nuclear war is unrealistic.

Implementing our strategy requires us to make some changes in our operational planning, such as gradually increasing the scope, variety, and flexibility of options open to us should the Soviets choose aggression. Some of this has already been done since 1977. More needs to be done. We must also improve the survivability and endurance of our command and control.

This is not a first strike strategy. We are talking about what we could and (depending on the nature of a Soviet attack) would do in response to a Soviet attack. Nothing in the policy contemplates that nuclear war can be a deliberate instrument of achieving our national security goals, because it cannot be. But we cannot afford the risk that the Soviet leadership might entertain the illusion that nuclear war could be an option--or its threat a means of coercion--for them.

In declaring our ability and our intention to prevent Soviet victory, even in the most dangerous circumstances, we have no illusions about what a nuclear war would mean for mankind. It would be an unimaginable catastrophe.

We are also not unaware of the immense uncertainties involved in any use of nuclear weapons. We know that what might start as a supposedly controlled, limited strike could well--in my view would very likely--escalate to a full-scale nuclear war. Further, we know that even limited nuclear exchanges would involve immense casualties and destruction. But we have always needed choices aside from massive retaliation in response to grave, but still limited provocation. The increase in Soviet strategic capability over the past decade, and our concern that the Soviets may not believe that nuclear war is unwinnable, dictate a U.S. need for more--and more selective--retaliatory options.

The doctrinal and planning measures we are taking--coupled with our force modernization programs--improve the effectiveness of our strategic nuclear forces across the full range of threats. They make clear our understanding that the surest way to avoid a war is to ensure that the Soviet leadership can have no illusions about what such a war would mean for Soviet state power and for Soviet society.

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In sum, our strategic policy is a balanced whole--of force modernization, of negotiated limitation, and of cogent and effective deterrence doctrine. We have a single objective--to keep the peace and to reduce the dangers of nuclear war. This is at once a military, a political, and a moral objective. We will continue to pursue an integrated policy of maintaining and modernizing our forces to maintain a proper balance, seeking to stabilize the arms competition, and improving doctrine and planning to deny the Soviets any hope of victory in any nuclear war, however they may define victory and at whatever level a conflict might be fought.

It is essential that our nuclear deterrent policy be understood by the American people, our friends and Allies, and our adversaries as well. That is the purpose of this speech. It is particularly incumbent on professionals such as you to understand and to explain complex, yet critical, national security policies. Indeed, that is one of the most important functions of those of us who, by formulating or executing policy, serve the national security interests of the United States.

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